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Chairperson: Ms. Intelmann ..... (Estonia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 56: Groups of countries in special situations (*continued*)

(a) Third United Nations Conference of the Least Developed Countries (*continued*) (A/C.2/61/L.37)

(b) Specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation (*continued*) (A/C.2/61/L.35)

1. **Ms. Balli** (Togo) said that, despite evidence of some progress, the recent High-Level Meeting of the Least Developed Countries had revealed a negative picture overall. That was partly because insufficient resources had been mobilized to support the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, but mostly because those countries lacked the capacity to draw up coherent and credible development programmes and to mobilize and manage the available internal and external resources. Their inability to assume responsibility for their economic and social development presented an enormous challenge, both to themselves and to their development partners. The efforts of the least developed countries should be supported by a spirit of shared responsibility within the context of a genuine partnership. In his report on the midterm comprehensive global review (A/61/173), the Secretary-General rightly recommended that the focus of attention for the remainder of the Programme of Action should be the full implementation of the Brussels Programme.

2. Despite its efforts to achieve macroeconomic stabilization and introduce structural reforms, Togo had encountered enormous difficulties in its implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action, due in part to the suspension of international technical and financial assistance. It had nonetheless begun to draft a long-term development strategy, which would include the preparation of a second-generation Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). A national political accord had also been agreed, with a view to achieving reconciliation, social cohesion, and development.

3. **Mr. Al-Azmi** (Kuwait) noted that the Secretary-General's report highlighted the efforts made in a large number of least developed countries, which had amended their strategies in order to improve governance, promote democracy and strengthen the judiciary and the legal system. Reforms had also been undertaken in the public sector to end corruption, promote the role of the private sector and improve efficiency.

4. Those countries were faced with a number of grave problems, including the prevalence of malaria and tuberculosis and, particularly in Africa, high rates of HIV/AIDS. The vulnerable countries were experiencing extremely difficult economic circumstances, due in large measure to their geograpnical situation, and needed support from international development partnerships. The developed countries should support the economic structures of the developing countries, including the least developed countries, and honour their commitments, to provide financial and technical assistance, by allocating 0.2 per cent of gross national product to development assistance.

5. Ever since gaining its political independence, the State of Kuwait had understood the importance of development for the countries of the South and had sought to do all in its power to fulfil its commitments to the developing countries. Aware of the contribution that could be made by trade liberalization and by increased investment in developing countries to promote sustainable development, Kuwait had revised its economic and trade legislation in order to stimulate development, promote its own integration into the world economic system and encourage foreign and local investment, and in 1998, had established a free trade zone.

6. The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development had helped more than 100 States throughout the world, disbursing US$ 10.5 billion in assistance. In addition, humanitarian and financial aid had been granted to numerous countries and peoples affected by natural disasters. Kuwait's petroleum-based economy and development had enabled it to promote development in more diversified sectors of economic life, thereby achieving sustainable development. While Kuwait needed to safeguard the infrastructure of its petroleum industry and guarantee it adequate technological resources, at the same time it recognized the need to respect the environment and to provide necessary

assistance to its neighbours, in a spirit of solidarity among South countries.

7. **Mr. Acharya** (Nepal) said that the measures outlined in the reports under consideration (A/61/82, A/61/173 and A/61/302) were critically important to the effective implementation of the various programmes of action for the least developed countries and the landlocked developing countries. In particular, the seven commitments of the Brussels Programme of Action and the Almaty Programme of Action (APoA) should be effectively implemented.

8. The recent High-Level Meeting of the Least Developed Countries had revealed the continuing precarious situation of those countries and the need for additional and effective measures, as identified in the Cotonou Strategy, for the further implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action. It was time to begin extensive preparation for the comprehensive midterm review of the APoA. The United Nations had a crucial role to play in that process, and the review should aim to build constructive partnerships and further strengthen the implementation of the agreed Programme of Action for the landlocked developing countries.

9. Nepal's current development plan focused on broad-based growth and a pro-poor approach, and the recent historic settlement reached by the Government and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) had paved the way for its political transformation. However, as a country emerging from conflict as well as a landlocked and least developed country, Nepal would require significant assistance from its development partners to implement the agreed programmes of action and national reconstruction and rehabilitation projects. The international community was well placed to provide assistance in the areas of trade concessions, debt relief and ODA.

10. The United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions must integrate and mainstream their efforts through the specifically designed partnership frameworks agreed in the Brussels Programme and the APoA. There was an equally critical need for good governance at the global level, designed to ensure that the special needs and concerns of the poorest countries received focused attention.

11. **Ms. Veiga** (Cape Verde) said that the recent High-Level Meeting of the Least Developed Countries had provided a unique opportunity for the international community to review the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action. Despite showing evidence of progress, the Meeting had also revealed that much more needed to be done to achieve the agreed targets and goals of the Programme. The Programme's degree of implementation varied from country to country and region to region, and the results in most least developed countries had been weak.

12. The Cotonou Strategy adopted in July 2006 had reiterated the political will and commitment of the least developed countries to accept the development challenge, but the support of the international community was vital. Although the Brussels Programme could set those countries on the path to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, her delegation had been somewhat concerned, during the preparations for the midterm review of the Programme's implementation, at the scope of the respective commitments envisaged for the least developed countries and their development partners.

13. The implementation of the Brussels Programme had been constrained by several factors, notably limited resources and institutional capacities. Developed countries that had not yet done so should therefore fulfil their ODA commitment to the least developed countries. Although the improved market access initiative taken by some World Trade Organization (WTO) members was welcome, the suspension of the Doha Round was regrettable. Cape Verde also welcomed the suggestion made by the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States that major oil-producing countries should contribute 10 cents per barrel produced to the cost of infrastructure development in the least developed countries, over the next decade.

14. Her delegation welcomed the work done by the Committee for Development Policy to refine the criteria for inclusion in and graduation from the list of least developed countries. It was particularly pleased that, in the view of the Committee, there was scope and need for further methodological refinements in the design and application of the criteria. The Committee should consider introducing the Economic Vulnerability Index as the main criterion, and her delegation also welcomed the Committee's view that in view of the high incidence of HIV/AIDS, life expectancy at birth should be included in the Human Asset Index. Cape Verde was working with its development partners to ensure a smooth transition

from the list of least developed countries, and had set up a smooth transition support group, comprising a small number of bilateral and multilateral partners, to define a framework of cooperation for the period after its graduation in January 2008.

15. **Mr. Al-Mannai** (Qatar) observed that the sixth Ministerial Conference of WTO had recognized that customs duties and quotas constituted obstacles to the least developed countries' access to world markets, and had set 2008 as the starting date for duty-free and quota-free market access for products originating from least developed countries. It was to be hoped that the requisite political will would be found to meet that target.

16. The developing countries had had high hopes of the trade negotiations held in the framework of the Doha Round in June 2006 and had been most disappointed by their failure. Qatar hoped that they would be restarted as soon as possible, so that they could be concluded in 2007; that was of paramount importance if the Millennium Development Goals were to be achieved.

17. While the least developed countries must shoulder their own responsibilities in designing and implementing their own development strategies, achieving the goals of the Brussels Programme of Action, would require a strengthening of genuine development partnerships in order to build capacity and mobilize resources, especially in Africa. There was also a need to find a solution to the problem of some countries' excessive indebtedness, which was draining most of those countries' resources.

18. Qatar had always acted as a fully fledged partner in the efforts of the least developed countries, both to eliminate poverty and to obtain a more equitable share of the fruits of globalization. Qatar had been honoured to host the fourth Ministerial Conference of WTO in 2004, from which the Doha agenda had resulted, and had also hosted the Second South Summit in 2005, at which the Emir of Qatar had introduced the initiative of establishing the Doha Fund for Development and Humanitarian Assistance.

19. Qatar fully intended to allocate the appropriate share of its gross national product to development assistance. Furthermore, during the General Assembly special session on financing for development, it had offered to host the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development. Finally, Qatar had made a donation of US$ 10 million to the United Nations Democracy Fund.

20. **Mr. Abreha** (Ethiopia) said that, five years previously, the least developed countries and their development partners had made a commitment to address the development challenges of the poorest segment of the international community. Although the results achieved were mixed, they were encouraging by historical standards. The challenge for the international community was to intensify its efforts to meet the agreed goals by the target date. The progress achieved in GDP growth and the social sector was encouraging, and improvements had also been noted in access to drinking water and sanitation.

21. Lack of infrastructure had been one of the main constraints in the development efforts of the least developed countries, which had been unable to benefit fully from market access provisions, largely because of supply-side constraints. The Aid for Trade Initiative should be implemented in order to address that issue. As outlined in the Secretary-General's report (A/61/82-E/2006/74), agriculture and rural development should be targets for poverty reduction in the least developed countries. Ethiopia had achieved significant improvements in development by adopting that focus. It had also made progress in democratic decentralization, democratic governance and judicial reforms, and had intensified its efforts to improve its roads and expand access to electricity. However, much remained to be done, particularly with regard to HIV/AIDS and under-five and maternal mortality. Ethiopia's socio-economic constraints were vast and deep-rooted, and it urged its development partners to provide assistance in its struggle to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development.

22. The development challenges of the least developed countries were overwhelming. According to the 2005 Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Programme, more than 1 billion people lived in abject poverty. Achieving the goals and targets of the Brussels Programme of Action in the least developed countries would contribute significantly towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Efforts to eradicate poverty should be placed at the top of the international agenda for development cooperation.

23. Remoteness from world markets, combined with prohibitive transport costs and risks, had imposed

significant constraints on export earnings, private capital flows and mobilization of domestic resources in landlocked developing countries. As a result, they were more vulnerable to external shocks, which in turn hampered their overall economic growth and development. In order to mitigate their high trade transaction costs, greater market access should be provided for their exports. Increased and immediate technical assistance should also be given to landlocked developing countries, in order to ensure their effective participation in WTO trade negotiations, notably those relating to trade facilitation.

24. Landlocked developing countries must have the right of access to and from the sea, as well as freedom of transit through the territories of transit countries. Addressing the special difficulties of the landlocked developing countries required the effective implementation of the Almaty Declaration and Programme of Action, and his delegation therefore fully supported the proposal to hold a midterm review of the Programme's implementation.

25. **Mr. Butagira** (Uganda) said that the Brussels Programme of Action offered the most tangible promise of attaining socio-economic progress in the least developed countries, but would not yield results without adequate support from the international community. Trade liberalization in itself would not benefit those countries unless they also received resources that would help them develop a competitive advantage, diversify away from volatile commodity markets, add value to their exports, reduce dependence on fossil fuel imports, and attract the right kind of foreign investment. The Doha Development Agenda should be revived to help the least developed countries introduce reforms and meet the costs of adjusting to open markets and globalization.

26. His delegation was disappointed that, owing to difficulties in agreeing on fundamental issues, a good opportunity had been missed at the High-level Meeting to define future development priorities within the framework of the Cotonou Strategy. All Member States had an obligation to provide more funding to save millions of people from dehumanizing poverty, and the Monterrey Consensus recognized that imperative.

27. In Uganda, transport costs hindered trade promotion and posed a major obstacle to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. His Government had been part of a regional effort to establish a transit regime for the Great Lakes region. It was engaged in policy reforms to increase operational efficiency on the main artery linking Uganda to the Kenyan seaport of Mombasa, and the agreement between Uganda and Kenya was being revised to transform the transit corridor into an economic development corridor. The Kenya-Uganda railway system had been privatized and its services improved, and a cooperation agreement between Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda would streamline cross-border operations and provide Uganda with access to a second seaport at Dar es Salaam.

28. In addition, more must be done in the vital areas of trade facilitation, infrastructure development and regional integration. Increased support was needed to help landlocked developing countries implement the Almaty Programme of Action, particularly through a regional approach to infrastructure development, such as projects carried out under the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). South-South cooperation could play a vital role and should be promoted. At the global level, the varying circumstances of landlocked developing countries should be taken into account, for example, through the granting of preferential market access to offset high transaction costs and maintain their competitiveness in the international market.

29. **Ms. Say** (Turkey) said that her Government was fully committed to implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action and was pleased with progress so far. The least developed countries had made laudable efforts to improve their productive capacities, governance and macroeconomic performance and to institute structural reforms, trade liberalization and privatization. They were also to be congratulated for developing the Cotonou Strategy.

30. Despite those noteworthy efforts, extreme poverty appeared to be increasing in many of the least developed countries, while life expectancy was declining. Most were affected by HIV/AIDS and some by civil strife. That situation was morally unacceptable. Further efforts were needed to help those countries meet the goals and targets of the Programme.

31. Her Government had provided substantial ODA to least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing countries, amounting to 0.17 per cent of GDP in 2005. It had also increased its humanitarian assistance, benefiting 17

African countries, and a number of projects were currently being implemented by the country's main international development agency.

32. Her Government was ready to cooperate with the least developed countries in agriculture, health, environment and good governance, as well as by helping those countries to attract Turkish investors and establish joint business councils or chambers of commerce.

33. Her Government supported the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, in part through contributions to the Trust Fund, and would continue to do so.

34. **Mr. Seyoum** (Eritrea) said that achievement of the Millennium Development Goals would directly contribute to the success of the Programme of Action for the least developed countries. Thirty-four out of the 50 least developed countries were on the African continent, and thousands of people died each day in sub-Saharan Africa. The continent would have 40 million AIDS orphans by 2010 if action was not taken immediately to halt that disease. Thousands more died each day from hunger or hunger-related illness, three quarters of them children under the age of five. Millions of people in the developing world suffered from long-term or acute illnesses, and 1 million died each year of malaria, a preventable disease.

35. In September 2000, the international community had promised the world's poor that by 2015 poverty would be cut in half, the under-five and maternal death rate would be reduced by two thirds, the spread of HIV/AIDS would be reversed and malaria eliminated. Recent reports, including the 2005 annual report of the Millennium Trust Fund, were suggesting that those promises might not be met. The United Nations system should not use the reform process as an excuse to delay the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, to which Member States should recommit themselves.

36. His Government had invested millions of dollars, especially on infrastructure for food security, to achieve the Goals and hoped that Eritrea would soon graduate from the list of least developed countries. All countries had to do their best: for rich and middle-income countries, that could mean changing their consumption patterns and sharing the savings with the poor. For the poor nations, that could mean good governance, effective use of aid funds, fighting corruption, accountability, and the like.

37. Achieving the Millennium Development Goals would bring security to the troubled world order. The Goals were human rights, and constituted the flagship of the development agenda of the United Nations. Politics should not divide the world and prevent it from helping people when there were enough resources to ease their hunger and pain.

38. Sadly, for many people in the developing world, especially in Africa, the past of poverty and strife was also the present. He dreamed of a future without hungry children, with sharply reduced levels of poverty, where the spread of HIV/AIDS had been halted and all eight Goals had been quickly met. The world community had been talking about those things for too long, but with little action. It was time to turn promises, pledges and initiatives into real commitments that would benefit humanity.

39. **Mr. Diallo** (Guinea) welcomed the least developed countries' progress, particularly in improved economic performance, social indicators, and governance, and their development partners' efforts regarding development assistance and debt reduction. Nevertheless, those efforts fell far short of the goals that had been set to break the cycle of poverty in the least developed countries.

40. To ensure that development goals did not remain empty promises for some countries, the entire international community must rise to the task. The least developed countries must make even greater efforts to build on their achievements and undertake bold new actions. Development partners, and the developed countries in particular, must do their part by increasing the amount and quality of development aid, reducing external debt loads, and removing the obstacles to exports. Indeed, it was the least developed countries that suffered most from the blockage in the Doha Round of trade negotiations.

41. The least developed countries were well aware that current trends must be reversed, lest they become further marginalized by globalization. For that reason, they had adopted the Cotonou Strategy earlier in 2006 to overcome obstacles they had encountered during implementation of the Programme.

42. The Government of Guinea had adopted its first Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper in 2002, and was currently preparing a second paper that would focus on the Millennium Development Goals and the commitments set out in the Programme of Action. It would result in significant projects and programmes on equity and governance, while human and institutional capacity would also be developed in education, health, rural development and infrastructure.

43. His delegation believed that the current negative trend in implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action was not inevitable and that its goals, objectives and targets could still be reached as long as all parties remained resolved to fulfil their commitments.

Draft resolution on the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and draft resolution on groups of countries in special situations: specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation

44. **Mr. Le Roux** (South Africa), introducing draft resolutions A/C.2/61/L.37 and L.35 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, emphasized the importance of full implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, especially the seven commitments contained therein, as well as of full and timely implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, in making a start on lifting millions of people out of abject poverty and hunger.

Agenda item 59: Training and research

(a) United Nations University (A/61/31; A/C.2/61/CRP.3)

(b) United Nations Institute for Training and Research (A/61/14)

45. **Mr. van Ginkel** (Rector, United Nations University (UNU)), introducing the report of the Council of the United Nations University (A/61/31), said that, while much had been done to enhance coordination and create synergies, more needed to be done in the system as a whole. The appointment of the new Director of the United Nations Staff College had provided a further opportunity to enhance cooperation in training activities. It was important to pay attention not only to differences in the governance and financing of different institutions but also to the differences in their missions, target groups and activities. UNU was fully prepared to contribute to targeted and sustained efforts to strengthen the United Nations research and training system, and to take initiatives wherever appropriate and possible.

46. The University had been enjoying steady and harmonious growth, both quantitatively and qualitatively, in its activities and outreach, and as an institution; the relevance, quality and impact of its work had grown significantly. Its real strength lay in its power to convene experts on a worldwide scale. An external evaluation of UNU was to be conducted in 2007.

47. During the reporting period, new institutes had come into being in Belgium and Germany, and in May 2006 agreements had been signed with the Government of Malaysia to establish a UNU International Institute for Global Health in Kuala Lumpur, in cooperation with the World Health Organization. UNU was developing major joint programmes with selected associated institutions around the world, and had enjoyed resounding success with the mobilization action to promote Education for Sustainable Development through a network of some 30 Regional Centres of Expertise, comprising schools, universities, communications media, museums, NGOs and private companies. Some of UNU's substantive contributions to the work of the United Nations had been in relation to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, open source software, and peacebuilding and peacekeeping.

48. **Mr. Boisard** (Executive Director, United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)), introducing his report (A/61/14), said that the Institute's achievements in the past two years had been due to strict administrative and financial management, the development of new pedagogic methodologies and the continual search for partnerships and networking opportunities.

49. The financial situation continued to be generally satisfactory, with expenditure under the Special Purpose Grants expected to increase to about US$ 25 million during the current biennium. The General Fund remained vulnerable, but its situation was improving thanks to a modest increase in

voluntary contributions from Member States and a noticeable increase in revenue from programme support costs (overheads). Total expenditure from the General Fund had amounted in the last biennium to US$ 2.4 million and should reach US$ 4 million in the current biennium. He gave three examples of the ways in which UNITAR had developed innovative training methodologies at national level (practical lessons learned from public participation in decisions on the environment in South Africa), at the level of the United Nations system (assistance to the United Nations Environment Programme for a survey of all environmental activities) and globally for all Member States (e-learning). He also drew attention to the list of almost 350 UNITAR partnerships and networks (A/61/14, annex VI), pointing out that they were supplemented by a more permanent and better structured network of 12 International Training Centres for Local Authorities/Actors (CIFALs), established by UNITAR on all continents.

50. On the issue of the review of UNITAR's mandate, he said that the Institute's programmes almost exclusively addressed the personnel of Member States rather than United Nations personnel. They currently covered just two major subject areas: training in the management of international affairs (diplomacy, negotiation, preventive diplomacy, conflict resolution and international law) and in economic and social development (basically, the application of international legal instruments and the training of local governments in implementing and applying the Millennium Development Goals at local level). The question was whether training could be made more effective by the better integration of institutes and research institutions, which would preserve their own goals and localized status. One solution might be to establish a single institution to manage all the complex and disparate elements. Another possible longer-term solution would be, if and when the conclusions of the report of the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence were implemented, to integrate research and training in all the Organization's programmes, thereby enabling the United Nations agencies to develop their own expertise and no longer systematically need costly outside consultants. The Board of Trustees had initiated a specific in-depth analysis of the matter and hoped to be able to make a genuine contribution to the reform process undertaken by the Secretariat.

51. **Mr. Turk** (Estonia), noting that his country had expressed its support for the UNITAR Decentralized Cooperation Programme by opening a CIFAL in Tallinn in 2006, asked the Executive Director to elaborate on the Institute's cooperation, in its Decentralized Cooperation Programme, with other United Nations entities, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and to explain how the Institute's training activities were linked with other United Nations development activities in developing countries.

52. **Mr. Boisard** (Executive Director of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research) replied that UNITAR had established two CIFALs in Africa, two in Asia, two in the Americas and five in Europe. Each Centre provided training focusing on new techniques. The new Centre in Tallinn would serve countries in the Baltic region, the former Soviet Union region and southern Africa and would focus on training in information and communications technologies. UNITAR was grateful for the assistance provided by the Estonian Government and Tallinn's municipal authorities.

53. UNITAR had received a very positive response from large multinational companies to the public-private partnership initiative and had drafted guidelines to ensure that the Institute did not become involved in commercial activities or appear to be representing donor companies. The Global Compact Office planned to publish the guidelines in its next newsletter and recommend that the organizations of the United Nations system should consider applying them in their negotiations and agreements with private sector actors.

54. The Institute would like the CIFALs to serve the entire United Nations system. It was currently sponsoring a workshop at its Centre in Atlanta, Georgia, with the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and UNDP and had worked with UNEP, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and, in particular, the World Bank.

55. **Mr. Amolo** (Kenya) said that UNITAR and the United Nations University played an important role in building competencies in diplomacy for the international community.

56. With regard to the University, he noted that the strength, weakness, opportunity and threat (SWOT)

analysis annexed to the printed text of the Rector's statement to the Committee indicated that UNU had the perception that it was no longer a "unique" institution as a network of networks and that it lacked sufficient coordination with other entities. The Report of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment might begin to address that concern.

57. The list of ways in which UNU planned to improve its effectiveness that was annexed to the Rector's statement included the establishment of a stronger institutional presence in New York, Geneva, Paris and Bonn. He was surprised that no reference had been made to Vienna and, in particular, Nairobi, given the presence in Nairobi of UNEP.

58. With regard to UNITAR, he wished to know what activities the Institute carried out in Nairobi. His delegation agreed that some UNITAR costs should be charged to the United Nations regular budget, as suggested in paragraph 10 of the report of the UNITAR Board of Trustees. With respect to paragraph 14 of the report, he said that the countries of East Africa would welcome closer cooperation with UNITAR, in particular on capacity-building for urban security, urban management, and parliaments.

59. **Mr. van Ginkel** (Rector, United Nations University), referring to the SWOT analysis, said that, although it was not necessary for the University to be unique in order for it to make a valuable contribution, it planned to address the concern expressed in the analysis by developing closer cooperation with other entities in the United Nations research and training system.

60. As to the Kenyan representative's question concerning the University's institutional presence in Vienna and Nairobi, he said that discussions were in progress between UNU and the Government of Slovakia on the establishment of a research and training centre on landscape and ecosystem health that would be located in Bratislava, very close to Vienna.

61. The University maintained close cooperation with UNEP and its institutional presence in Nairobi was based on that strong relationship. It also had a presence in Addis Ababa through its link with the local office of the International Livestock Research Institute of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research in that city. UNU endeavoured to increase cooperation and enhance system development bearing in mind the institutional infrastructure already in place in various locations.

62. **Mr. Boisard** (Executive Director of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research), replying to the questions from the representative of Kenya, said that for eight years UNITAR had been conducting training courses for diplomats accredited to organizations of the United Nations system located in Nairobi, New York, Geneva and Vienna, as the major centres of United Nations activity. In accordance with a number of General Assembly resolutions, in 2006 the Institute had begun to organize courses in other cities hosting multilateral organizations and had already done so at the regional commissions in Beirut, Santiago, Bangkok and Addis Ababa.

63. Africa was a priority for UNITAR, and in the previous biennium over 900 Kenyans had received training from the Institute. One UNITAR e-learning programme was devoted to debt and financial management. Another, very successful, e-learning course was offered for academic credit to participants from countries that contributed forces to peacekeeping operations. In that connection, he thanked the Governments of Norway and Canada for defraying the course fee for participants requiring financial assistance.

64. UNITAR was keenly aware of the importance of providing its services to countries most in need of them, in particular the developing countries.

65. **Mr. Hannesson** (Iceland) said that his Government was very proud to host the University's Geothermal Training Programme and the Fisheries Training Programme. Sustainable development was one of the pillars of his Government's policy on development cooperation. Information and training on sustainable development were vital for long-term development worldwide and his country would therefore remain committed to those two programmes.

66. Since the founding of the Geothermal Training Programme in 1979, 359 scientists and engineers from 40 countries had completed the annual six-month specialized course. A Master of Science programme had been established in 2000 in cooperation with the University of Iceland. His Government had also secured core funding for the Programme to expand its capacity-building activities through annual workshops and short courses in selected countries in Africa,

Central America and Asia. Budget proposals called for an increase in core funding of 30 per cent for the Programme.

67. Thus far, 103 fellows, including 36 women, from 20 countries had completed the Fisheries Training Programme. Funding from the Government for that Programme had increased by nearly 40 per cent from 2004-2005 and would increase further in the coming financial year.

68. **Mr. Owoaje** (Nigeria) said that his country appreciated the training programmes and activities of UNITAR and welcomed the increasing diversification of its services. His delegation hoped that the extension of the UNITAR training programme for civilian personnel in peacekeeping operations to include the special needs of women and children in conflict would help stem sexual abuse of women and children by United Nations peacekeeping personnel.

69. His delegation appreciated the partnership approach of UNITAR in seeking the involvement and commitment of national and regional institutions to tailor its programmes to their priorities and the Institute's policy of designing its programmes in collaboration with beneficiary Governments in order to ensure national ownership.

70. The Institute deserved the collective moral and financial support of Member States. A solution should therefore be found expeditiously to the unresolved issue of the Institute's rental and maintenance costs in New York and Geneva in order to remove that unacceptable burden. It was also imperative to find ways to increase voluntary contributions to the General Fund.

71. **Mr. Kodera** (Japan) said that the United Nations University currently had an expanded role to play, since the World Summit Outcome adopted in 2005 had underscored the importance of the four main issues on which UNU focused: peace and security; good governance, development and poverty reduction; science, technology and society; and environment and sustainability. The University must evolve further in order to fulfil its mandate.

72. UNU had proved its value by organizing courses, seminars and other events, in connection, inter alia, with the World Summit on the Information Society and the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. As a think tank for the United Nations system, the University should carry out more such activities and should identify areas where research and capacity-building were needed by working closely with the Secretariat, agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations. In addition, its outputs should be disseminated more widely and in more accessible form. In that way, topical research could influence United Nations policymaking and UNU could distinguish itself clearly from non-United Nations research institutions.

73. The University must continue to pursue internal reform, especially at its headquarters in Japan. To that end, UNU should make its activities more practical and timely; intensify its public relations efforts concerning its work, outputs and dialogues with host countries, Member States and the United Nations system; streamline and improve administrative management and implement its projects in an efficient and cost-effective manner; diversify its budgetary resources to ensure a sound funding base for its activities; and use the planned external evaluation as a means to strengthen its role as a think tank for the United Nations system. With those points in mind, his delegation would introduce a draft resolution prepared in close collaboration with the University.

74. Lastly, he said that his Government highly appreciated the significant contribution by the outgoing Rector of UNU in strengthening its activities and increasing its effectiveness and visibility.

75. **Ms. Say** (Turkey) said that her delegation was pleased that the training activities of UNITAR and the number of participants in those activities had increased significantly over the previous two years. She also welcomed the fact that all the programmes were self-funded.

76. UNITAR's continuing close work with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations described in paragraph 19 of its report (A/61/31) was a very positive development. However, some of the course materials still contained irrelevant texts based on inaccurate, one-sided and unsubstantiated allegations, a situation regarding which her delegation had expressed its serious concern in the Committee at the preceding session following the adoption of the draft resolution on UNITAR.

77. Inasmuch as the Institute had not taken action to correct the texts in question, her delegation reiterated the urgent need for better screening of the content of

the Institute's course materials. Turkey strongly believed that the Institute should uphold the principles of objectivity and reliability in its activities. Her country did not wish to lose confidence in UNITAR and requested the Institute to consider the issue seriously and take the required action.

78. **Mr. Boisard** (Executive Director, United Nations Institute for Training and Research) said that he believed there had been a misunderstanding. UNITAR had received the information from the Turkish delegation in Geneva and had made the requested corrections without delay. The new text was available.

Draft resolution on the United Nations University

79. **Mr. Kodera** (Japan), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/61/L.36, expressed the hope that it would raise awareness of the activities of the United Nations University and that many delegations would join the list of sponsors.

Agenda item 57: Eradication of poverty and other development issues (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) (*continued*) (A/C.2/61/L.22)

Draft resolution on the implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006)

80. **Ms. Kia** (South Africa), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the fact that 1 billion people were still living in abject poverty at the end of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty was the reason why the sponsors urged the proclamation of a second Decade.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.